

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

JANUARY 1996

ONE DOLLAR



Working Together For Trout



Director's Column

William L. Woodfin, Jr



Mel White

Director Woodfin tells Richmond grade schoolers about the Urban Fishing Program at Shields Lake in Byrd Park. Story on page 30.

It has been the habit of *Virginia Wildlife* to publish our trout guide in March. However, with our new year-round trout season, it seemed appropriate to move the trout guide to the January issue, when new fishing and trout licenses become available. In this issue, as with previous trout guides, our fisheries staff has prepared a thorough presentation of Virginia's trout resource.

Not only are avid trout anglers able to fish for trout year round, but they also have responded positively to our 1-804-525-FISH trout stocking information number. This number is updated daily during stocking season, and our customers tell us the information provided has proven to be quite helpful.

You will also read in this issue how we have added Shields Lake in Richmond's Byrd Park to the Urban Fishing Program — under a two-year agreement with the City of Richmond, the Department will stock the lake with trout from November to April, and with catfish from May to October.

These are just a few instances in which the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries has worked in cooperation with its constituents during the past year. However, this is a two-way street, and various citizens and organized user groups in the Commonwealth have contributed to our efforts for optimal fisheries management.

For instance, various chapters of the Izaak Walton League have

coordinated with the Department on trout enhancement programs, as have several other local conservation-minded groups who are concerned with improving fishing and fish habitat. These independent, unaffiliated constituent groups can be found across the Commonwealth.

The U.S. Forest Service is also part of this picture, as are other governmental entities. The Forest Service coordinates special projects with our Department through its fisheries habitat work in the mountainous upland parts of Virginia. In the areas under its jurisdiction, the Forest Service manages the habitat and the Department manages the fish.

Finally, there is Trout Unlimited. TU has encouraged and perpetuated Virginia's trout fishing tradition through youth fishing clinics, boosted riparian habitat protection by putting up fences and developing alternative watering sites for cattle, stocked fingerling trout and eggs into remote areas to re-establish native populations, and has labored with patience to open private trout waters to public use. Most TU chapters have adopt-a-stream programs in which they work with private landowners, as well as government agencies, to manage and enhance trout habitat.

All these constituent groups have made a contribution, and we thank them. More than that, the anglers of Virginia thank them.

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Cover: Photo by Dwight Dyke.

Back cover: Photo by Dwight Dyke.

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Dedicated to the Conservation of Virginia's Wildlife and Natural Resources



FLOOD

The rains started routinely enough on June 22, 1995, but they kept falling for days along the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains. In northwestern Virginia, particularly in the mountains around three of the state's most famous native brook trout streams—the Rapidan River and Staunton River in Madison County, and the North Fork of the Moormans River in Albemarle County, near Charlottesville—the rich forest soil reached the dangerous saturation point by June 27.

by Thomas Brandt

Trout streams will recover from last summer's deadly floods

As the rains continued it became impossible for these stream resources to escape damage. The native brook trout of the Rapidan, Staunton, and Moormans, descendants of a beautiful, tenacious strain that has survived many challenges, were about to face another test of resiliency. What happened next was perhaps the most cataclysmic event of the century for the major middle and lower sections of the three rivers.

On June 26, a low pressure front stalled against the mountains, trig-

gering pockets, or “storm cells” of tumultuous rains on the 27th. From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the 27th a range of some eight to 15 inches of rain fell in locations on and above the Rapidan, Staunton, and Moormans. The resulting flooding, estimated to happen once every 100 to 1,000 years, scoured streams with explosive force. Unlike valley floods, where rivers overflow their banks like a rising tide, flooding towns and nearby fields, then subsiding, these were torrents of enormous power. Raging water funneled down steep, narrow, mountain ravines, sweeping along thousands of tons of boulders, trees, and sediment, and destroying virtually every living thing in their path. In many places on the Moormans, an ideally diversified trout stream habitat that took centuries to develop, simply disappeared. Some sections of the Staunton were so scoured that the stream bed was lowered five to 15 feet, down to bare bedrock. In the Rapidan, car-sized boulders were tossed like marbles. Tree canopies, which are critical to keeping streams shaded and cool enough for trout, were often obliterated for hundreds of feet around stream beds.

According to Gary Martel, chief of the Fisheries Division for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF), Hurricane Camille in 1969 left people wondering about the resiliency of angling resources in Nelson County, but they recovered. “No one was happy about the flood, but we’ve been through this before. We expect to see the same kind of recovery in the rivers hit this summer as we have seen in the Tye and Piney rivers after Camille took a whack at them. After all, fisheries above and below the damaged areas are still in good shape.”

Surveys by fisheries officials in the weeks after the flood, including stream shocking operations, found nearly total loss of aquatic life in the lower sections of the Rapidan and Staunton, and in large sections of the Moormans. In geologic terms, the floods were natural events that have always occurred sporadically in the

Blue Ridge Mountains. In human terms, fishing enthusiasts may have lost prime water for some years to come.

A recent flood assessment report by Shenandoah National Park (SNP) officials said, “Bubbling mountain streams, once 15 to 30 feet wide and shaded by stream side trees, were ‘blown-out,’ resulting in 150 to 200 foot wide channels filled with rocks, boulders, and debris dams of debarked trees.”

There was human tragedy outside the park boundaries as eight people lost their lives, some 800 people were displaced from their homes, and 2,000 farms and homes were damaged. More than 400 secondary roads and 12 primary roads were closed at least temporarily, and dozens of bridges had to be repaired or replaced.

The lower, most devastated section of the Rapidan may take three to five years to return to its top-ranked brook trout fishing status, the most heavily damaged sections of the Staunton may take even longer, as might the Moormans, according to rough estimates by fisheries biologists from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

“We have 2200 miles of coldwater resource in the Commonwealth, and only about 10 miles of that suffered

in this flood,” Martel said. “We are hopeful about the recovery, especially since it was already in evidence last summer.”

Rapidan

The Rapidan is a true classic—one of America’s finest native brook trout streams. With a structurally diverse habitat, constant year-round flow, and a trout population that has remained good to excellent over the years, it is an irreplaceable Virginia resource.

The floods had almost no impact at the highest elevations, and recovery near the headwater is moving more rapidly. From near the Rapidan’s top by Hoover Camp, close to Skyline Drive, on downstream where it flows out of the park in to the Rapidan Wildlife Management Area, and just back into the park, the fishing has returned to quite good, according to Harry Murray, one of Virginia’s premier fly fishing experts. Mr. Murray said the insect life, as well as the brook trout population, did not suffer permanent damage, and that stories of bad fishing after the flood have been exaggerated. The rough access road alongside the Rapidan no longer exists at the lower levels, and the stream now runs in some places where the road used to be. However, in the stretches



Flooding on the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains, which caused such massive rock and mud flows, is a rare occurrence. It illustrates natural erosion at work, moving mountains.

Mel White

upriver, well above the Staunton confluence with the Rapidan, the road survived and has even had some minor improvements due to post-flood cleanup efforts by SNP crews.

The lower reaches of the Rapidan, in Madison County where it runs into a serene farm valley, was the epicenter of the flood damage of June 27. Nearly the bottom third of the Rapidan within the SNP has been changed beyond recognition, even to those who knew this once beautiful stream intimately from stalking brook trout through its stairstep pools and riffles. Boulders as large as 15 by 25 feet were driven more than a hundred yards downstream. Fishermen who return to the bottom section of the Rapidan show disbelief and disorientation. Taken there blindfolded, you would not be able to open your eyes and recognize the valley of the Rapidan.

Inside the park boundary the lower Rapidan was sampled for fish on July 13. In the section tested, which in previous years produced an average of 32 brook trout, there were none found. Instead of an average of nine fish species such as dace, shiners, and chubs, there were only three. However, VDGIF biologists said they expect that to a great extent these species will repopulate the area.

While recovery of the forest around the banks of the Rapidan is critical, aggressive, non-native species are already invading these now sunny areas. The slower growing timber such as hemlock, yellow birch, oak, maple, and yellow poplar are also disadvantaged because so much soil has been swept away, leaving only bedrock and boulders. After the flood the kudzu vine, which had been sparse, was seen growing rapidly in the now sunlit areas. The ailanthus, which is a non-native oriental tree seen in some areas of the park, has moved quickly to the banks of the Rapidan. Although the ailanthus, or "tree of heaven," is sometimes considered an aggressive trash tree, thriving in adverse conditions, and growing as much as eight feet a year, a plant with such characteristics can help deter bank erosion.

The Rapidan's heaviest devastation starts upstream of its confluence with the Staunton, and continues downstream into a picturesque Virginia valley. At this point the Rapidan leaves Shenandoah National Park and flattens as it flows past farms and the crossroads known as Graves Mill where a tiny, white clapboard post office and several other structures of timeless lineage, were swept away. Valley farmhouses that weren't caught by the flood waters were sometimes moved off their foundations by rivers of mud and rock that emerged from forested ravines in places where the valley floor meets the mountainside.

Staunton River

On July 13, the sections of the Staunton just above the confluence with the Rapidan were sampled by SNP officials. No fish of any species were found. In similar testing on seven previous years, the same section of stream yielded an average of 83 brook trout and as many as five fish species. By late in the summer, some fish were migrating back to the stream, possibly from the Rapidan.



Mel White



Mel White

Following the flood, efforts were immediately made to restore the lives of local residents who suffered through the flood. Heavily damaged property and roadways presented challenges, but work also went forward to bring back natural trout habitat in the rivers by placing large rocks where they will benefit trout the most.

The Staunton is a major tributary of the Rapidan and both have been maintained as catch-and-release brook trout streams. The Staunton has also had historically excellent trout populations, but less fishing pressure than the Rapidan since it is a smaller water, and can only be reached by walking trails, while the Rapidan had rough roads paralleling the stream.

Before the flood the Staunton was marked by a mix of large boulders and plunge pools, undercut rocks, root masses, excellent water quality, and a nearly 100 percent tree canopy—superb brook trout habitat. Because the Staunton also has a steeper gradient, and narrower channel than the Rapidan, the greatest, most destructive flood energy of June 27 occurred on the Staunton, then exploded on to the confluence with the Rapidan. The scouring effect of the boulders and tree rubble was so great that virtually the entire stream bed was lowered, in some places as much as 15 feet, on the lower 1.4 miles of the Staunton. Left behind was a massive boulder field with no tree canopy, and scattered, towering stacks of splintered trees. At higher reaches of the stream, damage was less radical, and recovery will be quicker.

North Fork Moormans River

The Moormans was intensively sampled for fish populations less than two weeks before the flood, and again after the flood on July 10. The June sampling of one key transect found a rich mix of 824 fish, representing 13 species and including 30 brookies and two brown trout. After the flood, the same transect sampling with identical methodology, biologists found a total of six fish from four species, and including brook trout. More than 99 percent of the fish were killed or swept away by the flood, and 75 percent diversity had been lost as well. But streams and rivers are dynamic and resilient, and recovery is expected.

Though a lower gradient stream than the Rapidan or Staunton, the North Fork Moormans had excel-



Lee Walker

Small feeder streams, normally one to two feet wide, roared down the mountain with enough force to move boulders the size of two-story buildings.

lent stream diversity, with good fish cover, and tree canopy. Much of that diversity was damaged because of stream scouring, with long stretches of alternating deep pools and riffles now replaced by ankle deep water running over flat fields of small rocks.

The good news is that the Blue Ridge Mountains are so supportive of trout habitat that stream rejuvenation began immediately in the summer of 1995, and by late summer some small, healthy fish were sighted in pools. The natural conditions that created these streams are likely to return much of this water to good brook trout habitat, though perhaps not for many years.

However, the late summer drought in Virginia threatened to create a one-two punch of scouring floods followed by scorching drought, but that hazard disappeared with the return of normal autumn rains. Water conditions were critical to the natural return of stream-bred brook trout to the full length of the Rapidan, Staunton, and Moormans. Fortunately water levels were near optimal for the brookies' October spawning season, and many brook trout that survived in the upper headwaters had a good breeding year. Their eggs are still in the reeds, and hatching will probably not occur until March. These young will begin to fill out the devastated areas as stream conditions improve, but we will not know about spawning success until next summer.

For the long term, the floods of June, 1995 are a classic opportunity to study the process of change and rejuvenation of the Blue Ridge Mountains. By studying the regeneration of the Rapidan, Staunton, and Moormans rivers, and their surrounding watershed, wildlife officials will learn more about the dynamics and resiliency of these increasingly important resources. □

Tom Brandt is a freelance writer who works out of Northern Virginia.



Brook trout, illustration by Michael Simon

by Larry Mohn

VDGIF Fisheries Regional Manager

Introduction

Virginia contains over 2800 miles of trout streams in addition to numerous ponds, small lakes and reservoirs. The total includes over 2200 miles of wild trout streams and about 600 miles of water inhabited with stocked trout. Virginia's diversified trout habitat offers a wide range of


trout fishing opportunities.

Virginia's warm climate and topography generally limit trout habitat to the western portion of the state. The Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains provide the elevation to maintain low water temperatures year-round, while the valley between these ranges contains the unique limestone formations necessary to produce highly productive spring creeks.

Trout management in Virginia consists of three basic programs. The *catchable stocking program* is the best

known and most popular. Such waters are stocked from October through May with catchable-sized trout. See the following *Trout Stocking Plan* on pages 12-13 for the streams and lakes stocked and their stocking schedule.

The *wild trout program* includes the management of reproducing populations of brook, rainbow and brown trout. Efforts are directed primarily at habitat preservation and proper regulation for protection of spawning stocks.



1996 Trout Guide

The *fingerling stocking program* involves sublegal trout stockings. This relatively small program is rapidly growing in size and popularity due to the high quality trout fishing provided.

Restrictions have been applied to certain wild trout waters as well as several types of stocked trout streams to provide anglers with the opportunity to catch more and larger trout throughout the fishing season. These special regulation areas include some of the state's best trout

waters and are described in detail in this guide.

For the first time in Virginia, the trout season will be open year-round in 1996. Fishing success for both wild and stocked trout should be very high through the spring, fall and mild winter periods. From June through September, normally low stream flows and warming water temperatures makes trout fishing more difficult. However, experienced trout anglers can find good trout fishing opportunities throughout the year.

All stocked, special regulation, and larger wild trout waters are featured on the five maps beginning on page 25 in this special issue.

New For 1996

The Department adopted a number of regulation changes that became effective in 1995, significantly altering the trout program for this year. Most notable is the year-round season which officially became effective last July. A new stocking program has been developed which allows the Department and Virginia's anglers to fully utilize the cool weather months for trout fishing. Trout will be stocked continuously from the first of October through the last of May according to the Trout Stocking Plan included in this article. With the increased fall and winter stockings and the expected dispersal of fishing pressure, both angling success and the quality of the angling experience should be enhanced.

Another significant change eliminates the requirement to have a trout license from June 16th through September 30th in designated stocked trout waters. This allows anglers interested in certain stocked trout waters the opportunity to fish for warmwater species without the additional license during the period of the year when no trout are stocked. Legal-sized trout caught during the warmer months may be

creeled whether an angler has a trout license or not.

Finally, the Department has provided a telephone number to call for trout stocking information. This recording is updated each day at 4 p.m. during the stocking season. The number is 1-804-525-FISH.

Catchable Trout Stocking Program

As in most states, put-n-take trout fishing draws the most interest and attention in Virginia, probably because of the availability of catchable-sized trout and ease of capture. Virginia's catchable program is supported by hatcheries located at Marion, Paint Bank and Wytheville. Three rearing facilities are located at Marion, Williamsville, and Montebello.

Trout eggs are collected from large brood stock in early fall at the hatcheries, and placed in hatching jars which maintain an even flow of well-oxygenated water through the eggs. Jars must be constantly cleaned and dead eggs removed to control disease. After 25 to 30 days the trout begin to hatch. The small "fry," as they are called, remain attached to their egg sacs for about 14 days, and draw their food from it. The fry are kept indoors in small troughs until their sacs are absorbed and they begin taking small pelleted food. When they reach a suitable fingerling stage (2-3 inches) they are transported to rearing facilities where they are placed in raceways.

The fish are fed several times daily for at least a year until they reach catchable size (9-11 inches). During this rearing period, it is necessary to clean raceways daily to control disease and occasionally grade fish to ensure that the larger trout will not eat smaller ones.

The program is covered primarily from the sale of trout licenses. In

addition to a valid state fishing license, a trout license is required to fish legally in designated stocked trout waters. Annual output from the program is approximately 1,250,000 catchable trout in addition to variable numbers of fingerling and subcatchable trout used in other programs.

The 1996 trout fishing season will be the first without an opening day. All streams on the stocking list have already received at least one stocking and will continue to be stocked into May. Stockings will be discontinued after late May or early June and will resume after October 1. The Department has included a number of biweekly streams this year. These streams will be stocked every other week from March through May and monthly during the fall. Other streams will be stocked at various intervals depending on their potential to hold trout during the late spring and fall. Fishermen should find that most streams have good numbers of trout throughout the season.

Waters to be stocked are listed by county in the following *Trout Stocking Plan*. The plan indicates the frequency of stocking and the specific stocking periods for each stream. Call your local VDGIF office for more information or 1-804-525-FISH

for daily trout stocking updates during stocking season.

Stocked trout streams are marked with appropriate signs which identify the portion of stream stocked. Marked sections are open to public fishing in accordance with agreements between the Department and private landowners. This is the only case where anglers are not required to have landowner permission before fishing on private water.

Urban Fishing

The Department's Urban Fishing Program was launched in December of 1993. This program is designed to provide high-quality fishing opportunities for anglers in urban areas of the state. Currently, the program includes the stocking of four lakes: Dorey Park Lake in Henrico County, Shields Lake (Byrd Park) in Richmond, Locust Shade Park in Prince William, and Northwest River Park in Chesapeake. Catchable trout are stocked from November through April. At all locations except Northwest River Park, channel catfish are stocked during the remaining warm weather months. This program is co-sponsored by the Recreation Department in each locality.

Special Regulations

Fee Fishing Areas

The fee fishing areas offer put-n-take trout fishing with the added advantage that trout are stocked several times weekly throughout the season. The fee fishing program operates from the third Saturday in March through Labor Day at Clinch Mountain and Crooked Creek and through September 30th at Douthat. During the fee fishing season, a daily permit is required in addition to a valid Virginia fishing license. After the fee fishing season, these areas revert to designated stocked trout waters and a trout stamp is required instead of the daily permit. The creel limit at these areas is six fish per day.

Clinch Mountain Fee Fishing Area:

The Clinch Mountain Fee Fishing Area is located in southwest Virginia, about 7 miles west of Saltville. The area consists of the 330-acre Laurel Bed Lake and approximately seven miles of Big Tumbling Creek and its two major tributaries, Briar Cove Creek and Laurel Bed Creek. Big Tumbling Creek is a large, steep gradient stream with numerous small waterfalls and large, deep rocky pools. The two tributaries are much smaller with a more moderate gradient. The lake provides a good trout fishery and is used to regulate summer flow in the streams. Trout are stocked daily (except Sunday) throughout the fee period in the streams, and fishing must cease at 7 p.m. to allow for restocking. Camping is available at the area and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries owns and manages the surrounding land.

Crooked Creek Fee Fishing Area

Crooked Creek is located in Carroll County, five miles east of Galax. The area consists of five miles of



Dwight Dyke

stream which is stocked. In addition, approximately two miles of stream are managed as a wild trout fishery. Crooked Creek is a wide, fairly low gradient stream with a gravel bottom. Surrounding land is mixed fields and woodlots not characteristic of the more common mountain stream drainages. As at the Clinch Mountain Area, fishing must cease at 7 p.m. to allow for restocking. No facilities are available at Crooked Creek for camping, but private facilities are available nearby.

Douthat Lake Fee Fishing Area

The Douthat Fee Fishing area was expanded in 1994 to include about four miles of Wilson Creek along with the stocking of 60-acre Douthat Lake. In addition, the fee fishing season was extended through September 30th and a children-only fishing area was established. The lake provides fishing for bass, bluegill, pickerel, and catfish in addition to trout which are stocked twice weekly. The lake, stream and surrounding land are located within Douthat State Park and are administered by the Virginia Division of Parks. Available recreation includes camping, hiking and swimming in addition to fishing. Cabins are also available for rent if application is made well in advance. The park is located in a beautiful mountain setting with most of the surrounding land within the George Washington National Forest.

Delayed Harvest Trout Streams

In 1989, the Department initiated this management program with establishment of Virginia's first "delayed harvest" trout fishery. This program incorporates aspects of both fish-for-fun and put-n-take trout fishing. Catchable-sized trout are stocked in the fall, winter and spring. From October 1st through the following May 31st, only single hook artificial lures may be used and all fish must be returned unharmed. From June 1st through September

30th, general trout regulations are in effect and trout may be creel. This management approach appears to have considerable potential to provide high-quality fishing to a large number of fishermen.

Back Creek (Bath County)

The rugged mountains that form the backdrop to the Back Creek special regulation area is one of the area's most appealing features. The stream is about 25 feet in width with moderate gradient and excellent fly-fishing opportunities. The stream has been extensively reconstructed to improve trout habitat by Virginia Power who constructed a pump storage facility just upstream. The land adjacent to this stream section is managed for recreation by Vir-

Brown trout, photo by Mark Giovannetti



ginia Power. In addition to trout fishing, the area offers a campground, picnic pavilion, outdoor games and two warmwater lakes for fishing and swimming. Take Route 39 west from Warm Springs to Mountain Grove then right on Route 600 for six miles.

North River (Augusta County)

The delayed harvest section of the North River extends from the base of Elkhorn Dam downstream 1.5 miles to the head of the Staunton City Reservoir. This is a remote section of stream that can only be reached by foot trail. Access is available by parking at Elkhorn Lake and following the trail along the lake to the spillway. This area provides a remote, scenic fishing opportunity during the winter and spring months. Stream flow in the North River is usually low during summer and fall.

South River (Augusta County)

The delayed harvest section extends from the Second Street bridge in Waynesboro upstream 2.4 miles to the base of Rife Loth Dam. This stream section runs through the city of Waynesboro and is in an urban setting. South River is a relatively large, wide stream with shallow runs and riffles. The stream provides outstanding fly-fishing opportunities because of its size and its abundance of aquatic insects. The stream is open to fishing year-round and provides excellent winter fishing.

Jackson River (Bath County)

The special regulation area of the Jackson River in Bath County is stocked several times a year with catchable-sized trout. Only single-hooked, artificial lures may be used and all trout less than 12 inches must be released. The special regulation section extends from the USFS swinging bridge located just above the mouth of Muddy Run, upstream 3 miles to the last ford on FS 481D. This section can only be reached by foot travel, either from the Hidden Valley area or off of Route 623 and FS Road 481. The area provides a remote fishing opportunity on a relatively large, productive stream. A trout license is required to fish.

Catchable Trout Stocking Plan

Only one change has been made to the following list of streams and lakes that are being stocked in 1996. Cove Creek in Tazewell County was actually dropped last year due to loss of a portion of stream due to posting. This stream is still available for wild trout fishing on National Forest lands. The June, 1995 floods may make a few bodies of water in Albemarle, Greene and Madison counties unavailable for stocking early in the season. Any changes necessitated by flood damage will be announced by news release.

1996 Catchable Tr

Category of Water

Category of Water

ALBEMARLE COUNTY

Moormans River (N & S Forks) B (NSF)
Sugar Hollow Reservoir Biweekly

ALLEGHANY COUNTY

Clifton Forge Reservoir* A
Smith Creek* C (NSF)
Pounding Mill Creek* B (NSF)
Jerrys Run* C

AMHERST COUNTY

Davis Mill Creek* C
Little Irish Creek* C (NSF)
Pedlar River (Upper)* B
Pedlar River (Lower)* A
Piney River (S. Fk. & Proper)* B (NSF)

AUGUSTA COUNTY

North River (Natural Chimneys) B
North River (Gorge)* B
North River (Upper)* B (NSF)
Mills Creek* C
Braley Pond* A
Back Creek* B
Upper Sherando Lake* A
Lower Sherando Lake* A
Hearthstone Lake* A
Falls Hollow* C (NSF)
North River (Tail)* DH
South River DH
Elkhorn Lake* Biweekly

BATH COUNTY

Back Creek DH
Back Creek* B
Pads Creek* C
Jackson River (Hidden Valley)* Biweekly
Jackson River (Rt. 623)* A
Bullpasture River Biweekly
Spring Run Biweekly
Douthat Lake +
Jackson River Special Reg.*

BEDFORD COUNTY

Hunting Creek* B (NSF)
Liberty Lake B

BLAND COUNTY

Lick Creek B
Laurel Fork Creek C
Wolf Creek A

BOTETOURT COUNTY

Jennings Creek* B
North Creek* B
Middle Creek* C
McFalls Creek* C
Roaring Run* B

BUCHANAN COUNTY

Dismal River B
Russell Fork River C

CARROLL COUNTY

Crooked Creek A **
Laurel Fork A
Little Reed Island Creek Biweekly
Lovills Creek C
Stewarts Creek B (NSF)

CHESAPEAKE CITY

Northwest River Park U

CRAIG COUNTY

Barbours Creek* B (NSF)
North Fork Barbours Creek* C (NSF)
Potts Creek* Biweekly

DICKENSON COUNTY

Frying Pan Creek C
Russell Fork River (Haysi) B
Pound River Biweekly
Russell Fork River (Bartlick) Biweekly
Cranesnest River B

FAUQUIER COUNTY

Thompson WMA Pond B

FLOYD COUNTY

Mira Fork B (NSF)
Burkes Fork A
Goose Creek C
Howell Creek B (NSF)
Little Indian Creek B (NSF)
Little River Biweekly
Laurel Fork B
West Fork Little River B
Rush Fork C (NSF)

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Maggadee Creek B
Runnett Bag Creek B

FREDERICK COUNTY

Winchester Lake Biweekly
Hogue Creek B
Paddy Run* B
Clearbrook Lake Biweekly

GILES COUNTY

Big Stoney Creek* Biweekly
Dismal Creek* B (NSF)

GRAYSON COUNTY

Big Wilson Creek B
Middle Fox Creek B
Fox Creek* B
Elk Creek A
Helton Creek C
Hales Lake* A

GREENE COUNTY

Lynch River C
South River B

HENRICO COUNTY

Dorey Park Lake

HENRY COUNTY

Smith River (Dam)
Smith River (Lower)

HIGHLAND COUNTY

Bullpasture River
S. Br. Potomac River

LEE COUNTY

Martins Creek
North Fork Powell River

MADISON COUNTY

Hughes River
Robinson River
Rose River

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Craigs Creek*
Poverty Creek*
South Fork Roanoke River
Toms Creek

NELSON COUNTY

Tye River
South Rockfish River

PAGE COUNTY

Cub Run*
Upper Passage Creek*
Hawksbill Creek

PATRICK COUNTY

Ararat River
Clarks Creek
Dan River (Above Talbot)
Dan River (Below Powerho)
South Mayo River (North F)
South Mayo River
Rockcastle Creek
Round Meadow Creek
Poorhouse Creek

PRINCE WILLIAM COUN

Locust Shade Park
Quantico MCB

PULASKI COUNTY

Peak Creek

RICHMOND CITY

Shield Pond

ROANOKE COUNTY

Glade Creek
Roanoke River (City)
Tinker Creek
Roanoke River (Salem)

ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY

Mill Creek*

Put Stocking Plan

Category of Water

Category of Water

Category of Water

U Irish Creek*
South River
Maury River

B
B
Biweekly

B
A

Biweekly
B

A
A

A
A
Biweekly

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY
North Fork Shenandoah River
German River
Dry River
Silver Lake
Shoemaker River
Briery Branch Lake*
Hone Quarry Lake*
Hone Quarry Run*
Slate Lick Lake*

B
C
B (NSF)
B
C
A
A
C
B

A
A
Biweekly

RUSSELL COUNTY
Big Cedar Creek

A

B
C
Biweekly
B

SCOTT COUNTY
Little Stony Creek*
Stock Creek
Big Stony Creek
Straight Fork (Lower)
Bark Camp Lake*

B
C
B
C
A

Biweekly
C (NSF)

B
C
B

SHENANDOAH COUNTY
Stony Creek
Mill Creek
Peters Mill Creek*
Tomahawk Pond*
Passage Creek*
Little Passage Creek*

A
B
C
B
Biweekly
C

B
B
B (NSF)
Biweekly
C
C
B
C (NSF)
C (NSF)

SMYTH COUNTY
South Fork Holston River (Lower)
Staley Creek
South Fork Holston River (Gorge)*
Comers Creek*
Hurricane Creek*
Cressy Creek*
Dickey Creek*
Middle Fork Holston River (Marion)
Middle Fork Holston River (Upper)

Biweekly
B
A
C
C
C
C
A
C

U
B

B

TAZEWELL COUNTY
Laurel Creek*
Roaring Fork*
Little Tumbling Creek
Lake Witten
Lincolnshire Lake

C
C
B
A
A

U

WARREN COUNTY
Happy Creek

B

A
Biweekly
A
Biweekly

A

WASHINGTON COUNTY
Whitetop Laurel (Upper)*
Whitetop Laurel (Lower)*
Tennessee Laurel
Big Brumley Creek
Valley Creek
Big Tumbling Creek

A
Biweekly
A
C
C
A **

Straight Branch*
Bear Tree Lake*

C
A

WISE COUNTY
Clear Creek*
High Knob Lake*
Middle Fork Powell River

C
B
B

WYTHE COUNTY
Stoney Creek*
Gullion Fork Creek*
Gullion Fork Ponds*
West Fork Reed Creek*
Cripple Creek

C
C
C
C
Biweekly

Category A, stocked once in each of the following periods:
October; November; December; January-February;
March; April 1-20; April 20-May 10; May 10-30

Category B, stocked once during each of the following periods:
November 15-December 30; January 1-February 15;
February 15-March 30; April 1-20; April 20-May 10

Category C, one stocking in each of the following periods:
November 15-December 30; February 15-March 30; April 1-April 30

Biweekly
October-1 stocking; November-1 stocking;
December/January-1 stocking; February-1 stocking;
March 1-May 30-every other week. Total of 10 stockings

* National Forest Streams

+ Fee fishing water that receives a put-n-take
stocking after fee fishing season

DH Delayed Harvest Water-Special Regulations apply

(NSF) These waters **do not** receive fall & early winter
stockings

U Urban fishing waters, trout license required
November 1 through April 30

** A section of these waters is reserved for a fee
fishing area

Stocking information for put-n-take stocking can be obtained by calling 1-804-525-FISH. The recording is updated each weekday during put-n-take trout stocking after 4:00 p.m.

Trout Species Of Virginia

TROUT belong to the salmon family (Salmonidae) which are native only to the northern hemisphere. Salmonidae includes trout, salmon, char, whitefish and grayling.

Brook Trout

(*Salvelinus fontinalis*)

Coloration: The brook trout is Virginia's most colorful trout species. Its back is dark olive green with light, wormy lines. Its sides have light spots on a dark background and red spots surrounded by a bluish halo. Often the entire side has a bluish tint. Its belly area is generally white with intense orange-red streaking during spawning season. Lower fins are distinctively marked with an outer white edge, black line and reddish coloration.

Distribution: The brook trout is endemic to eastern North America, meaning that originally it occurred in no other region. Initial distribution included the Atlantic seaboard south to Cape Cod, the Appalachians south to Georgia, then extending west through the Great Lakes to Minnesota and north to Hudson Bay. Due to its popularity as a gamefish, however, it has been introduced into many other regions and is now found in much of the western United States, Europe, South America, New Zealand and Asia. No other species of trout occurred in Virginia prior to man's stocking activities.

Biology: Brook trout generally spawn in October and November in Virginia. Spawning takes place in small streams, generally near the tail of a pool. Brook trout generally move upstream to spawn, often into the smaller headwater tributaries. An average female in Virginia lays approximately 100 eggs in a clean gravel bed. Eggs hatch about two months after they are spawned, and fry emerge from the gravel the following March.

Brook trout in Virginia reach sexual maturity at two years of age and an average length of 6.5 inches. Life span of this species is generally less than 4 years in this region, with most fish reaching about 9 to 12 inches by this time. Brook trout to 18 inches have been collected in Virginia and some streams contain occasional trout of 12 to 16 inches. However, very few fish in a population can be expected to reach this size even with restricted fishing.

The diet of brook trout consists of almost anything in the stream. Although their preferred foods consist of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates, minnows, salamanders and frogs are also taken. In most cases, available food is a limiting factor in the unproductive mountain streams common to Virginia. Therefore, fish must be non-selective and opportunistic to compete. **State Record:** 5 lb., 10 oz., Big Stony Creek, Shenandoah County.

Rainbow Trout

(*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)

Coloration: This fish has an olive-green back often with a silvery cast grading to a silvery white underside. The dominant characteristic is the pink band extending from the cheek to near the tail. Rainbows are generally well spotted with black spots intensifying on the upper fins and tail. The anal fin is often tipped with white in streambed fish.

Distribution: Rainbow trout are native to the Pacific Coast from Alaska to northern Mexico eastward to the continental divide. The steelhead is the same species, differing only in its need to migrate to and from the ocean. Rainbows have been widely distributed and now occur throughout the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South America, Africa, Japan, Asia, Europe and Hawaii. In Virginia, the species is well established in the southwestern region of the state and is the dominant trout in the Mt. Rogers Area. North of Roanoke, distribution is quite scattered with most rainbow populations occurring in spring creeks. Although rainbow



Dwight Drake

trout have displaced the brook trout over much of its range in the southeastern United States, most of the remaining brook trout habitat in Virginia does not appear suitable for the rainbow.

Biology: Life history of various rainbow trout populations can differ significantly. Certain strains will migrate from a lake or ocean into streams to spawn, while others may remain in the same stream throughout their life. Also, time of spawning can vary greatly between populations. Certain behavioral and physiological differences are genetic, providing fish managers with additional management tools.

In Virginia, most wild rainbow trout populations are strictly stream residents. Spawning occurs in gravel beds similar to those used by brook trout. The major difference is that rainbow trout are generally spring spawners, laying eggs in March. Hatchery managers have altered this natural spawning time, however, to create fall spawners for hatchery purposes. This fall spawning characteristic is apparently re-

tained by some of Virginia's wild rainbow trout populations. Rainbow trout also have greater reproductive potential than brooks, with females laying 800 to 1000 eggs depending on the size of the fish. This higher reproductive capacity is probably the reason over-exploitation is less of a problem than it is with brook trout.

The diet of rainbows is quite similar to that of brook trout. Larger rainbows often show a greater preference for minnows than do brookies, but the main diet still consists of invertebrates. Rainbows are somewhat more selective than brook trout and therefore slightly more difficult to catch.

Rainbows have the potential to attain a much greater size than brook trout, but in Virginia's mountain streams they exhibit similar growth and age structure. In spring creeks and large reservoirs, however, rainbow trout over 5 pounds are not uncommon. **State Record:** 14 lb. 7 oz., Greer Trout Pond, Grayson County.

Brown Trout

(*Salmo trutta*)

Coloration: The dorsal area of this fish is usually brown, giving

way to silvery sides and a yellowish underbelly. Pronounced black spots, often surrounded by a lighter halo, are spread along much of its body, extending well below the lateral line. In addition, irregularly shaped red or orange spots are also present along its sides. Some dark spots occur on the dorsal, adipose and tail fin, but such coloration is not as concentrated as on rainbows. The adipose fin is usually an orange/red color.

Distribution: Brown trout are native only to Europe and western Asia. They have been widely introduced elsewhere and are now found throughout the eastern United States, southern Canada and the Rocky Mountains, as well as in South America, Africa, Australia and New Zealand. In Virginia, brown trout distribution is limited, with most wild populations occurring in the Carroll, Floyd, and Patrick County areas. Small scattered populations also occur in the lower portion of many larger wild brook trout streams throughout the state.

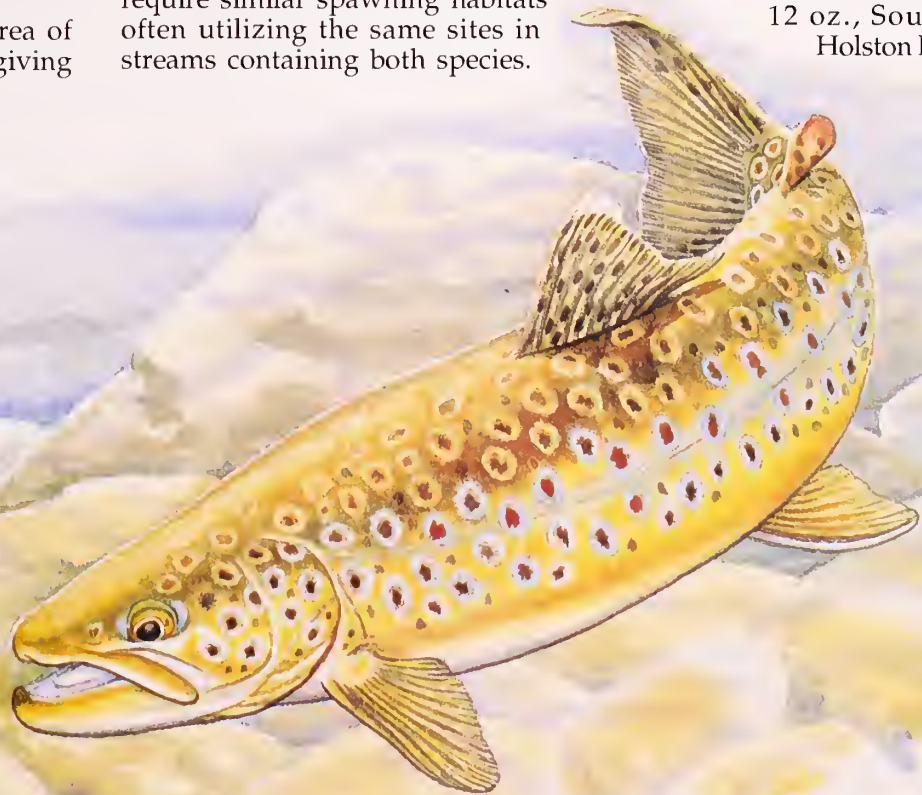
Biology: Brown and brook trout require similar spawning habitats often utilizing the same sites in streams containing both species.

Brown trout spawn later than brook trout, generally in November and December in Virginia. They have a higher reproductive potential than the other two species, mainly because of their larger size.

Brown trout reach sexual maturity at two to three years of age. The life expectancy of this species is much longer than that of the other two trout. Although life spans of 10 to 15 years have been reported, brown trout in Virginia usually do not exceed four to five years of age. The longer life span naturally increases the potential size of the brown despite annual growth rates similar to brook trout. Small mountain streams that rarely have brook trout over 12 inches will often produce brown trout over 20 inches.

Brown trout are highly carnivorous, maintaining a diet of insects, crustaceans, mollusks, salamanders, frogs, rodents, and fish. Fish and crayfish are the predominant diet of browns over 12 inches while smaller trout generally stick to invertebrates. Larger browns have a tendency to feed at dusk and after dark, making the larger fish difficult to catch. **State Record:** 14 lb.

12 oz., South Fork Holston River.



Brown trout; illustration by Michael Simon

Wild Trout Program

Wild trout populations require cold, well-oxygenated water, a clean stream bottom and good fish cover. In Virginia, most trout habitat losses occur through increased stream temperature, siltation and stream channel alteration.

Water temperature requirements may be the most critical factor facing Virginia's trout populations, and the state's generally warm climate and normally low summer stream flows do not help the situation. Most shaded mountain streams do not exceed 70°F during the summer, which is suitable for trout; however, clearing of only a short section of streamside vegetation during logging or farming operations can raise temperatures significantly. In most cases, maximum stream temperatures in the low 70's are within the tolerable range for trout, but such temperatures improve the habitat for other stream fishes which trout can not compete against.

Siltation and other more direct forms of habitat alteration, such as channelization, have also cost Virginia many miles of trout water. Silted stream bottoms decrease the stream's insect population, an important source of trout food. Siltation also makes trout reproduction difficult. Trout lay eggs in stream gravel, and clean gravel is necessary to insure movement of oxygenated water over the eggs. As little as a quarter-inch of silt over trout eggs can result in 100 percent mortality.

Alteration of stream channels is also of critical concern, not only due to the increased siltation it causes, but also due to the removal of fish cover and the potential to raise water temperatures. Trout require overhead cover such as an undercut bank, large rocks or submerged logs. When such cover is removed, the trout leave. Lack of suitable cover limits the number of large trout a stream can support.



Dwight Dyke

Virginia lost many good wild trout populations prior to the mid-1970's due to habitat degradation. However, many of the land-use practices that resulted in those losses—widespread stream channelization, poor logging techniques, removal of streamside vegetation, intensive agriculture in riparian areas, etc.—have been improved to the point where over the past two decades, physical habitat has been improving. In addition, the Department maintains a current inventory of wild trout streams that provides the data necessary to protect this critical habitat. Despite the recent past trend toward improving physical habitat conditions, many wild trout populations are now being threatened by gradual acidification due to acid deposition. These water quality changes are being closely monitored by the Department.

The Department's trout stream inventory identifies over 2200 miles of wild trout streams in Virginia. Biologists are encouraged to find that brook trout, the only trout species native to Virginia, still accounts for 80 percent of the wild trout resource in the state. Rainbow trout, a western introduction, have taken over many of the native brook trout streams in the other southeastern

states. In fact, Virginia currently has more native brook trout streams than all other southeastern states combined.

Growth rates of wild trout, particularly brook trout, in Virginia are exceptional when compared with growth rates for similar streams in some other states. In most Virginia streams, adult brook trout average 8 to 10 inches by their third year of age. In respect to the number of streams available and the size of trout present, Virginia probably offers the best native brook trout fishing south of New England.

The major management problem associated with Virginia's wild trout population appears to be excessive fishing pressure on many of the more popular streams, resulting in over-exploitation. Unlike warmwater fish such as bass and bluegill, trout have a very low ability to reproduce. Therefore, in heavily fished areas, it is imperative to protect trout until they are able to spawn at least once. In order to accomplish this objective, a 7-inch minimum size limit has been imposed on all trout creel in Virginia. Such a limit will allow most wild trout to reach spawning age before they are subject to harvest.



Rainbow trout; photo by Doug Stamm

Special Regulation Wild Trout Streams

In the following streams, regulations require the use of single hook artificial lures and all trout less than 9 inches in length be returned to the water unharmed. The exceptions are the Rapidan River and its tributaries, Stewart's Creek, North Fork Moorman River, Dan River, East Fork of Chestnut Creek, Roaring Fork and South Fork Holston River, which require the release of all fish caught, and Whitetop Laurel/Green Cove Creeks which have a 12-inch minimum size limit.

Buffalo River (Amherst County)

Special regulations apply to that portion of North Fork of Buffalo River and its tributaries within the George Washington National Forest. Access is available by forest trail off of Forest Road 51 or from the end of State Route 635. Buffalo Creek is a moderate to high gradient stream dominated by large boulders and deep pools. The stream contains a good native brook trout population with numerous fish 8 to 10 inches in length.

Big and Little Wilson Creeks (Grayson County)

The special regulation sections of Big Wilson and Little Wilson Creeks and their tributaries include all portions of each stream within the boundaries of Grayson Highlands State Park and the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. Big and Little Wilson Creeks provide the opportunity to fish for both wild rainbow and brook trout. Brook trout are primarily restricted to the headwaters of both streams and their tributaries. Rainbow trout can be found throughout the area. Big Wilson Creek offers some spectacular scenery. Large boulders predominate the stream channel, interspersed with deep pools associated with a steep gradient characterize the stream. Access can be gained through Grayson Highlands State Park or Route 806 and 817 off U.S. Route 58. Be prepared to do some hiking to fish this area.

Conway River/Devils Ditch (Greene County)

Special regulations apply to that portion of Conway River and its major tributary, Devils Ditch, within the Rapidan Wildlife Management Area. The stream contains brook trout in the upper reaches with wild brown trout scattered through the lower portions. Adult brook trout range from 7 to 11 inches in length, brown trout occasionally exceed 20 inches. The stream lies north of Stanardsville and can be reached by Route 615 from Graves Mill. The area adjoins the Shenandoah National Park.

Dan River (Patrick County)

The Dan River in Patrick County from the Pinnacles Powerhouse to Townes Dam is designated as a catch-and-release trout fishery. The Dan River below the Pinnacles Powerhouse (Kibler Valley) remains put-and-take trout water. Reproducing brown trout are the dominant species in the lower reaches of the section, while wild brook trout are found in the upper reaches. This three-mile section of the Dan River has been subjected to very low flows for years, however, a new agree-

ment with the City of Danville has resulted in greatly improved flows. The special regulation section can be reached by taking Route 8 south of Stuart to Route 103 west, turn right on Route 648 at Claudeville and proceed to the powerhouse. In addition, the section can be reached by taking Route 614 south from the Meadows of Dan. Turn left on Route 602 from Route 614 and proceed to Townes Dam. A permit from the City of Danville is required and can be obtained at no charge at the Pinnacles Powerhouse or from the City Utilities Department. Contact: City of Danville, Director of Electric Division, Department of Utilities, P.O. Box 3300, Danville, VA 24543. Phone: 804/799-5270.

East Fork of Chestnut Creek (Grayson and Carroll Counties)

East Fork of Chestnut Creek, locally known as Farmer's Creek, has recently been designated a catch-and-release trout fishery. The special regulation section includes all portions of the creek upstream of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The lower mile of the special regulation area is a low gradient native brook trout stream with numerous deep pools and undercut banks. The stream decreases in size and increases in gradient upstream and is characterized by numerous small plunge pools and a dense rhododendron canopy. Adult brook trout average 8 to 13 inches in length with occasional larger fish in the lower reaches. The stream lies south of Galax, crossing the Blue Ridge Parkway a short distance east of Route 89.

Little Stony Creek (Giles County)

Special regulations apply to that portion of Little Stony Creek in the Jefferson National Forest. Most of the special section is below the Cascades waterfall. The upper reaches of Little Stony Creek contain native brook trout, but rainbow trout comprise most of the trout population below the Cascades. Adult rainbows average 7 to 12 inches in length. The area is heavily used by hikers and picnickers. The stream is located near Pembroke and can be reached by Route 623.

Little Stony Creek (Shenandoah County)

Little Stony Creek is a small mountain brook trout stream. The special regulations apply to that portion of stream above Woodstock Reservoir. Adult brook trout presently average 7 to 10 inches in length. The stream is located west of Woodstock and Forest Service Road 92 crosses the lower portion of the special regulation section. Much of the upper reaches can only be reached by foot trail.

North Creek (Botetourt County)

The upper section of the stream (above the first bridge upstream of the North Creek campground) is designated for special regulations, while the lower portion remains put-n-take trout water. Rainbow trout predominate, although brook trout are present in the headwater tributaries. Adult trout will range from 7 to 12 inches. The stream is located east of Buchanan, a short distance from I-81. The Jefferson National Forest maintains a campground adjacent to the stream and vehicular access is available along most of its length.

North Fork Moormans River (Albemarle County)

That portion of the Moormans River lying within the Shenandoah National Park is designated as fish-for-fun. The stream has historically contained an excellent population of brook trout with numerous adults of 8 to 12 inches. In addition, a small population of wild brown trout can be found in the lower half of the stream. However, this drainage was struck with devastating floods during June, 1995. The stream suffered significant habitat damage and resident trout populations have been severely reduced. At the time of this printing, the area is closed to fishing. If it is reopened to fishing in 1996, do not expect the quality of trout angling you may have experienced in the past. It will require several years for this population to recover. Access to the Moormans River has been restored over State Route 614 past Sugar Hollow Reservoir but much of the streamside trail no



longer exists. Call the Shenandoah National Park for current information.

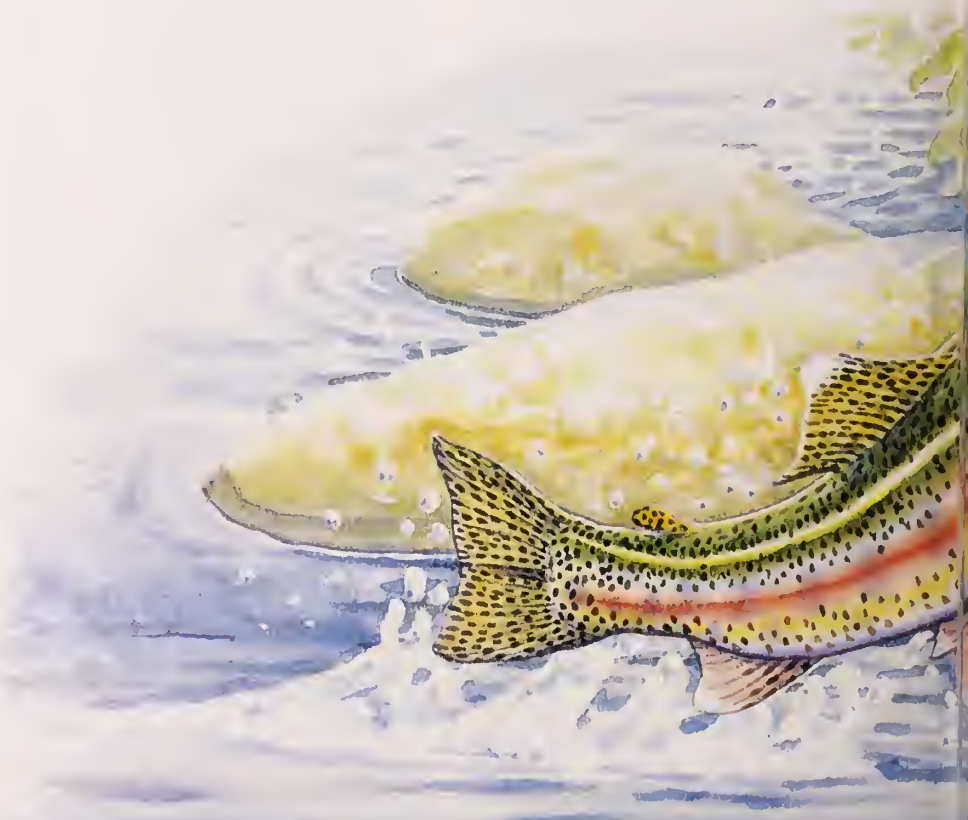
Ramsey's Draft (Augusta County)

Ramsey's Draft and its tributaries within the George Washington National Forest provide over 10 miles

of native brook trout water. Most of this section of stream is located within the Ramsey's Draft Wilderness Area providing the angler with the opportunity to fish for quality native trout in a remote setting. Summer flows are usually quite low in this stream so plan to fish Ramsey's Draft during the springtime. To reach Ramsey's Draft, drive 15 miles west of Churchville on State Route 250 and look for the Mountain Home Picnic Area on the right. A foot trail parallels the stream from the picnic area.

Rapidan River (Madison County)

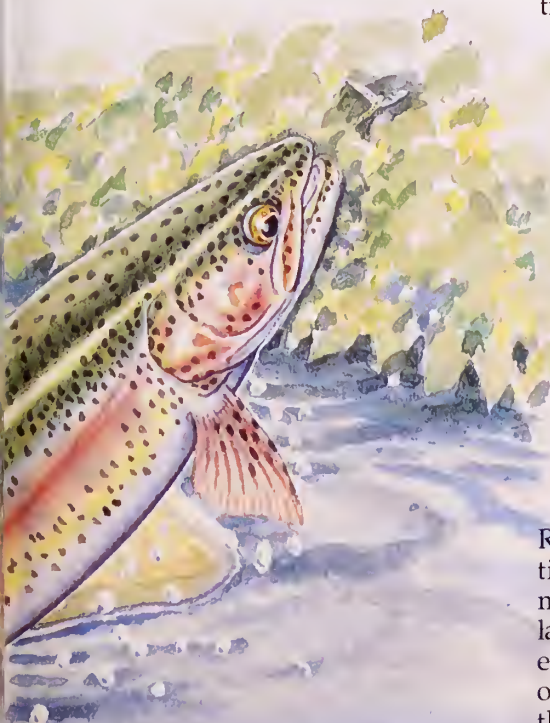
The Rapidan River is Virginia's best-known trout stream. Not only was it the state's first special regulation stream, it was also the site of the Presidential Retreat established by President Hoover. Much of the original Camp Hoover is still intact and is occasionally used. The special regulation area of the Rapidan includes all the stream and its tributaries within the Shenandoah National Park and the Rapidan Wildlife Management Area. The stream generally



Rainbow trout; illustration by Michael Simon

contains an excellent native brook trout population with good numbers of 10 to 11-inch adults.

This stream drainage was hit by a devastating flood in June, 1995. At the time of this printing, Shenandoah National Park has closed their sections of stream to fishing. Stream habitat has been severely impacted along the lower reaches and in one tributary, the Staunton River. Impacts to the resident trout population can be expected to be high in the Staunton River and lower reaches of the Rapidan. The impact of these floods on trout populations in the upper Rapidan and other tributaries should be much less severe. Access to the Rapidan has been restored over Route 662 from Graves Mill and over Route 649 from Criglersville. Call the Shenandoah National Park or local VDGIF office for current conditions.



Roaring Fork (Tazewell County)

This special regulation area is located within the boundaries of the Beartown Wilderness Area of the Jefferson National Forest. Acidification of this stream resulting in a steadily declining brook trout population prompted the inclusion of this stream section into Virginia's catch and release trout regulations. Access to the special regulated section is difficult and some hiking will be required. Access can be gained from Forest Service Road 222 off of Route 16, south of Tazewell.

St. Mary's River (Augusta County)

The special regulation section includes all portions of the St. Mary's River above the gate at the National Forest boundary. It is a fairly high gradient stream with a number of waterfalls. Although water levels can get quite low along lower reaches, flows are much improved upstream and large, deep pools provide ample trout cover. Adult brook trout average 8 to 12 inches in length.

Due to acidification of the stream in recent years, brook trout have replaced rainbows as the dominant trout species. The stream lies east of Raphine off of Route 608 a short distance from I-81. Most of the area is accessible by foot trail only and backpacking is popular.

South Fork Holston River (Smyth County)

This section of the South Fork Holston River lies within the property boundaries of VDGIF's Buller Fish Hatchery. Regulations allow only the use of artificial lures and all trout caught must be released. This special regulation section of stream provides an excellent opportunity to catch trout of trophy size. Access can be gained through the Buller Fish Hatchery property off of Route 650, south of Marion.

Stewart's Creek (Carroll County)

Stewart's Creek is another of the catch-and-release trout fisheries in the state. It is a high-gradient native brook trout stream with numerous

plunge pools, rock ledges, and a dense rhododendron canopy for cover. Approximately 4.5 miles of Stewart's Creek and its two major tributaries, North Fork and South Fork Stewart's Creek, were opened to the public in 1989 for year-round fishing. Only single hook, artificial lures can be used.

Stewart's Creek Wildlife Management Area is southeast of Galax on the east side of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Take Exit 1 off I-77. Follow the trailblazer signs to the area.

Whitetop Laurel/Green Cove Creeks (Washington County)

The special regulation area includes the lower mile of Green Cove Creek plus Whitetop Laurel Creek from the mouth of Green Cove to the first bridge above the village of Taylors Valley. Whitetop Laurel is one of Virginia's largest and most beautiful wild trout streams. Wild rainbow trout dominate, with most adults in the 7 to 14-inch class. A few wild brown trout provide occasional trophy fish. The special regulation area is located east of Damascus near the Tennessee line and lies within the Mount Rogers Recreation Area. Minimum size limit in this section is 12 inches.

Shenandoah National Park

The Park provides an entire region of special regulation trout streams extending from Front Royal to Waynesboro. Regulations require the use of single hook, artificial lures only, and restrict daily creel limits to five fish, all of which must be eight inches or more in length. The season is open from the third Saturday in March through October 15. Most streams within the Park contain good populations of native brook trout, but not all are open to fishing. Some isolated brown trout are also found in the lower reaches of the large, east slope streams.

The Park is currently reviewing its fisheries management program and will be considering some changes in its trout fishing regulations. If any of these changes are adopted, they may become effective during 1996. Call the Shenandoah National Park for current updates.

Fingerling Stocking Program

The fingerling stocking program is the smallest of the state's three management programs, but also the fastest growing. Established in the mid-1970's, it is designed to take advantage of the natural potential of high-elevation lakes, deep reservoirs, cold-water tailwaters and spring-fed streams, to produce quality trout fishing opportunities where wild fisheries are not possible due to lack of natural reproduction.

Because summer water temperatures are usually a limiting factor to trout survival in Virginia, under this program a stream or lake must provide suitable year-round water temperatures for trout survival, have good habitat, and be productive enough to provide adequate food for good growth.

Suitable trout waters are stocked once annually with fingerling or subcatchable (smaller than the legal size limit) trout, and often length limits and angling gear restrictions are imposed to protect these small fish until they reach harvestable size. The special regulation gear restrictions imposed are necessary to avoid high hooking mortality rates that occur when bait fishing is permitted. These fish will often be caught several times before they eventually reach harvestable size, and the program can only be successful if hooking mortality remains low.

Depending on the length limit, these stocked fish will not reach a legal size for six months to two years. During this time, trout lose most of their hatchery characteristics, both in appearance and behavior, and create a fishery that approaches a wild one in terms of fishing experience.

Some of Virginia's most exciting trout fishing opportunities can be found within our fingerling stock-

ing program, and by stocking small fish once a year, a high quality fishery can be developed at a fraction of the cost of the more common put-n-take program. Many anglers have discovered this quality angling and participation in the program is rapidly growing. VDGIF recognizes this growing interest and is continuing to develop new waters in the state.

Trout Lakes

The warm summer climate of Virginia limits the potential for development of good trout populations in lakes. Numerous small ponds and lakes are stocked under the catchable stocking program (see *Trout Stocking Plan*), however, very few provide good year-round trout habitat for management of wild or put-n-grow trout fisheries. In order to provide adequate coldwater habitat in Virginia, a lake must either be located at high elevations where cool summer temperatures prevail, or be deep enough to maintain a cold layer of water. Virginia has five small lakes at sufficient elevation for trout and three reservoirs deep enough to provide a two-story fishery. These two-story reservoirs stratify during summer months, providing an upper, warmwater layer where fish such as bass, bluegill, crappie and catfish exist, and a deep, coldwater layer suitable for trout.

Laurel Bed Lake (Russell County)

Laurel Bed Lake is a 330-acre, mountaintop impoundment located approximately 10 miles northwest of Saltville. The lake is included in the Clinch Mountain Fee Fishing Area and, in addition to providing a unique fishery, is used to augment flow to Big Tumbling Creek during summer months. As with the remaining sections of the fee fishing area, a daily permit is required in addition to a state fishing license. The fishery has been based almost entirely on brook trout in past years. Fishing is usually excellent through June with limits of trout being common. Favored fishing methods include nightcrawlers, mealworms,

flies and spinners. Minnows are not allowed at the lake in order to prevent introduction of other fish species. Fishing usually becomes sporadic as the lake temperature increases, with fish hitting well for a few days, then slacking off for several days. Favorite summer fishing spots are located around coves where spring branches enter. Late summer and early fall fishing is dependent on the number of fish that survive through the summer, and changes significantly from year to year. Limited camping is permitted



Brook trout. Photo by Mark Giovannetti



Dwight Dyke

on the management area and a concession is in operation.

Lexington City Reservoir (Rockbridge County)

The Lexington City Reservoir is a 22-acre, high elevation lake located in Rockbridge County. It is a put-n-grow lake that is stocked annually with brook trout. The brookies have done well in the reservoir and many measure 9 to 13 inches in length.

It is a long hike across USFS lands to the reservoir and primitive camping is permitted. General fishing

regulations are in effect and no trout stamp is required.

Mills Creek and Coles Run Reservoirs (Augusta County)

Mills Creek (17 acres) and Coles Run (13 acres) are located in the Pedlar Ranger District of the George Washington National Forest. They are both old Augusta County Water Supply Reservoirs that were first opened to fishing in 1990.

The lakes are managed as put-n-grow lakes and are stocked annually with small brook trout. Samples col-

lected show good populations of 10 to 12-inch brook trout. built by the Soil Conservation Service for flood control and water supply, and is now managed by the City of Harrisonburg. An access road is available off of Route 33. Boats, without motors, are permitted but must be carried to the water as no ramp is provided. Fingerling brook trout have been stocked since 1976 and fishing has been permitted since 1979. Fisherman success has been good with most fish in the 8 to 14-inch range. In addition, occasional large brook trout of 2 to 3 pounds have been taken. No camping is per-

mitted at the lake, but primitive camping is available in the National Forest nearby.

John W. Flannagan Reservoir (Dickenson County)

This 1143-acre Army Corps of Engineers reservoir is located in the Cumberland Mountains near the Virginia-Kentucky state line. Nearly 50 miles of rugged shoreline terrain surround the lake perimeter. The maximum lake depth is 166 feet with an average depth of 59 feet. Beginning in October of each year, the lake level is dropped 16 feet below the normal summer pool. These conditions remain throughout the winter months until early spring.

The lake was managed primarily as a put-n-take fishery for rainbow trout from 1966 to 1976. In 1991, stocking resumed to establish the lake as a trophy fishery. Sub-catchable McCaughy rainbow and Crawford brown trout are now stocked yearly and trout in excess of four pounds have been collected.

Any good shad imitation fished below 35 feet should entice these trout to hit. In the spring, early summer and late fall, trout should be found throughout the entire lake. However, after August 1, fishing the main body of the lake from the junction boat ramp to the dam is recommended.

Several launch ramps exist and boat access areas are provided at the spillway, lower Twin Area, junction area and both the Cranesnest and Pound River areas. Campgrounds are also available. Contact the U.S. Corps of Engineers, John W. Flannagan Dam and Reservoir, Route 1, Box 268, Haysi, VA 24256-9736.

Lake Moomaw (Alleghany/Bath Counties)

This flood control reservoir was completed in 1981 with the closing of the Gathright Dam on the Jackson River. It resulted in the formation of a 13-mile long, 2530-acre reservoir with more than 43 miles of shoreline.

Much of the shoreline is adjacent to the 13,428-acre Gathright Wildlife Management Area which is owned and managed by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. The av-



lected show good populations of 10 to 12-inch brook trout.

There are no facilities and access by foot is about a half mile to Coles Run and 1½ miles to Mills Creek. For more information, call the Pedlar Ranger District in Buena Vista at (703) 261-6105. Access is west of Route 664 at Sherando off of Forest Road 42.

Skidmore Lake (Switzer Dam)

Skidmore Lake is a 104-acre impoundment located off of Route 33 west of Harrisonburg. The dam was

mitted at the lake, but primitive camping is available in the National Forest nearby.

Trophy Trout Lakes

Regulations on the following two-story reservoirs were changed in 1995 to reflect the potential of these lakes to produce trophy-sized trout. The creel limit on these reservoirs was reduced to 2 trout per day with a minimum size limit of 16 inches. These changes should result

erage depth of the lake is 80 feet and flow augmentation results in a normal 5 to 15-foot drawdown by late summer.

Trout management at the reservoir consists of stocking subcatchable brown trout and McConaughy strain of rainbow trout.

Brown trout fishing has been good in recent years. Brown trout of 2 to 5 pounds should be numerous in 1996. McConaughy strain rainbow trout are doing very well, also. Most trout are caught by trolling with shad imitation crankbaits, some are caught still fishing with live shad 25 feet down and others by jump fishing. Some are caught incidental to bass fishing.

The area around Moomaw provides nearly year-round opportunities for boating water sports, fishing, camping, picnicking, hiking, birding, sight-seeing, photography and hunting.

Boats are restricted to a maximum length of 25 feet. No house boats are allowed and excessive noise is prohibited. Trailer-launched boats must be launched at ramps at Fortney Branch, Bolar Flat or Coles Point. Canoes and cartops can be launched at Coles Mountain Fishing Access, McClintock Bridge, McClintock Point and Midway.

The lake is open 24 hours a day, year-round. There is a 12-inch size limit on bass. Neither a trout license or National Forest stamp is required.

The Bolar Mountain Recreation Area provides camping, swimming beaches, restrooms and picnic grounds. Bolar Flat has a picnic area, a four-lane boat dock, a courtesy dock, a marina, and restrooms. There are primitive camping areas at Greenwood and McClintock Point. The Morris Hill Campground and picnic area, the four-lane Fortney Branch ramp and courtesy dock, and the Coles Mountain Area are located on the south end of the lake in Alleghany County. A daily fee is charged for swimming, picnicking, camping and use of boat ramps.

For facilities information, contact the James River Ranger District in Covington (703) 962-2214; the Warm Springs Ranger District in Hot

Springs (703) 839-2521 or 839-2442; or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Covington (703) 962-1138.

Philpott Reservoir (Henry County)

Philpott Lake is a 2880-acre reservoir located west of Martinsville. Warmwater fishing is the major attraction, but trout are also stocked annually. Stockings generally consist of 8 to 9-inch McConaughy rainbow trout released in the fall of the year. Fishing success has been highly variable, probably due to the varying volume of the summer coldwater habitat available. Trout can be caught throughout the lake during spring, fall and winter, but during summer months, most successful fishermen fish deep at night. Philpott generally produces some of the larger rainbow trout taken each year, with catches up to 7 to 8 pounds.

Special Regulations

In the following streams, special regulations require the use of single hook, artificial lures and restrict

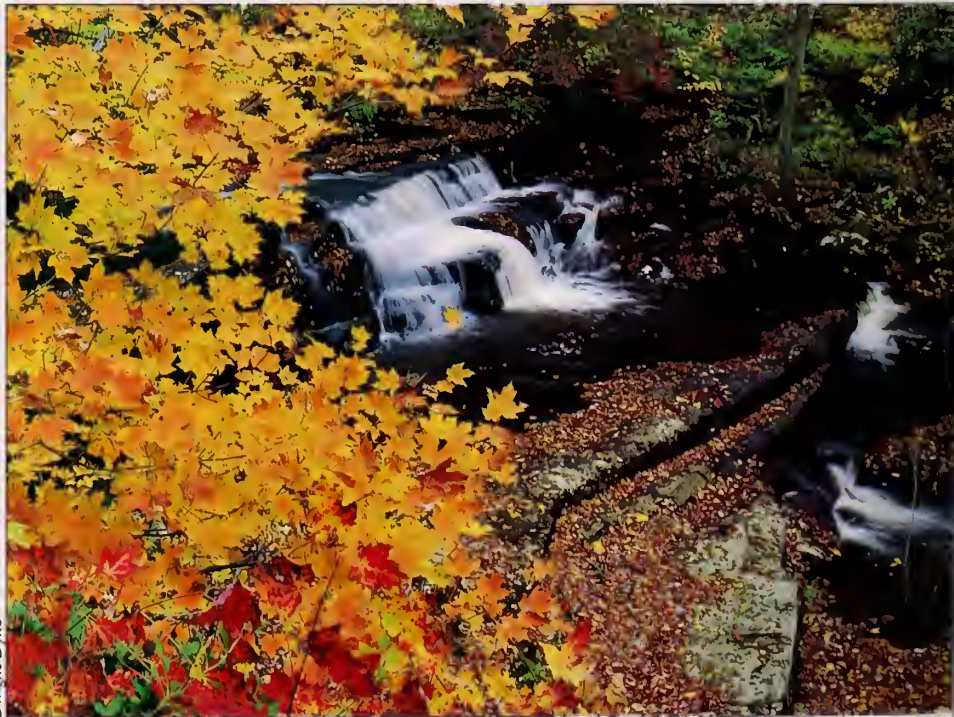
creel to fish over 12 inches in length. Trout from 6 to 8-inches are stocked periodically and allowed to grow for a year or two before being creeled. This approach can be used in streams that maintain good flow, cool summer waters and are productive enough for good growth of trout.

Smith Creek (Alleghany County)

The special regulation section extends from the Forest Service boundary above the old C & O Dam upstream 2.5 miles to the Clifton Forge Dam. Within this section, subcatchable brown trout are stocked once annually. The stream contains good numbers of 8 to 12-inch brown trout with occasional fish to 20 inches. The stream maintains good flow throughout the year and provides wide, flat pools and good fly-fishing opportunities. The best way to access this stream is by Route 606 from Clifton Forge to the access road for the Clifton Forge Water Plant. Fishermen must park at the entrance and walk a half mile to the stream.

Snake Creek (Carroll County)

Special regulations apply to all of Big Snake Creek below Hull Ford and all of Little Snake Creek below



Dwight Dyke

the junction of Routes 922 and 674. The stream is located just north of Fancy Gap. Snake Creek is a moderate gradient, softwater, gravel bottomed stream with an average width of about 18 feet. Holdover of stocked fish is good along with a fair population of native brook trout.

Trophy Trout Streams

Management of a few selected streams as trophy trout water is relatively new to Virginia. Regulations restrict fishing to the use of single hook artificial lures and the creel to 2 fish per day over 16 inches (except for Mossy Creek where the creel is one fish per day over 20 inches). Mossy Creek, Sinking Creek, and Smith Creek, furthermore, are restricted to fly-fishing only. The management approach is to stock fingerling trout (5-6") in high quality streams where they will grow exceptionally fast.

Buffalo Creek (Rockbridge County)

The special regulation area includes that section of stream from

the confluence of Colliers Creek upstream 2.9 miles to the confluence of North and South Forks of Buffalo Creek. The stream flows through private land and requires a written landowner permit to fish, which is available from the VDGIF office in Verona (please include a SASE). Brown and rainbow trout are stocked annually as subcatchables and good numbers of 10 to 16-inch fish are available. Trophy fish of 5 to 8 pounds have been caught in the stream. Buffalo Creek can be reached by taking Route 251 from Lexington.

Dan River (Patrick County)

The special regulation section is located within the Pinnacles Hydroelectric Project in what is known as the "Grand Canyon" of Virginia. The terrain is quite rugged and the scenery is spectacular. The section contains approximately six miles of stream and extends from Talbott Dam downstream to the confluence with Townes Reservoir. The fishery is maintained by natural reproduction and consists primarily of rainbow trout in the 8 to 12-inch size range and brown trout in the 8 to 18-inch size range. The upper reaches of the special regulation section can

be reached by taking Route 614 south from the Meadows of Dan. Turn right on Route 601 and proceed to Talbott Dam. The lower reach of the section can only be accessed by boat at the upper end of Townes Reservoir. A permit from the City of Danville is required and can be obtained at no charge from the City Utilities Department or on site at the Pinnacles Powerhouse. Contact: City of Danville, Director of Electric Division, Department of Utilities, P.O. Box 3300, Danville, VA 24543. Phone: 804/788-5270.

Mossy Creek (Augusta County)

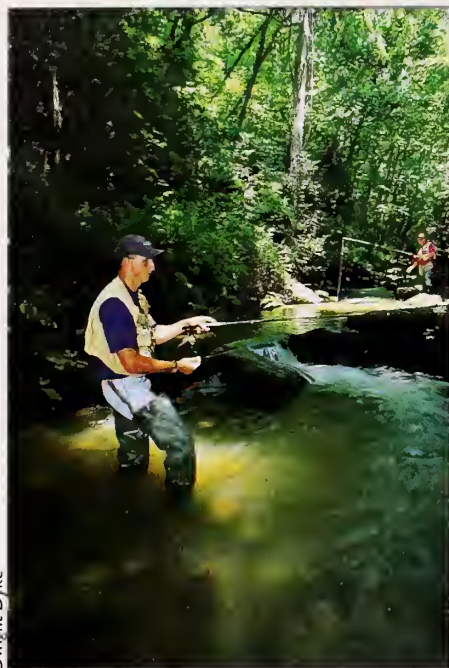
The special section includes about 4 miles of stream extending upstream from the Augusta/Rockingham County line. The stream is located just off of Route 42 south of Bridgewater. Fishing in Mossy Creek is restricted to fly-fishing only and a written landowner permit must be obtained (available from the VDGIF office in Verona. Please include a SASE). Mossy Creek is a classic, meadow limestone stream averaging about 15 feet in width and flowing through open pastures. Brown trout in the 3 to 7-pound class are available to fishermen.

Sinking Creek (Giles and Craig Counties)

The special area includes two sections of stream. The first section extends from a cable with VDGIF sign 0.4 miles below the State Route 703 low-water bridge, upstream 1.8 miles to a cable with VDGIF sign (which is 0.1 mile above the Reynolds farm covered bridge). The second section runs from a cable with VDGIF sign 1.0 mile below the State Route 642 bridge, upstream to a cable with VDGIF sign (which is 0.5 miles above the State Route 642 bridge in Craig County). Brown and rainbow trout are stocked annually and angling is restricted to fly-fishing only. A fishing permit is required to fish this stream. Permits may be obtained at the VDGIF office in Blacksburg and locally at the Twin Oaks Grocery Store on State Route 42 in Craig County, the Super Value Grocery Store in Newport, and the Orvis Shop in Roanoke.



Dwight Dyke



Dwight Dyke

Smith Creek (Rockingham County)

The special section includes approximately 1.5 miles of stream near Lacy Spring. Smith Creek flows through private farmland and requires a written landowner permit to fish, which is available from VDGIF office in Verona (please include a SASE). Brown trout fingerlings are stocked annually in the fall. Good numbers of 10 to 16-inch trout are available and fish over 4 pounds have been reported.

Smith River (Henry County)

The special area includes the posted section extending 3 miles downstream from Towne Creek near the town of Bassett. Smith River is Virginia's most noted trophy trout stream. The historic state record 18 pound, 11 ounce brown trout was taken in 1979 and numerous trout exceeding 10 pounds have been caught. Smith River is a large, flat, tailwater stream receiving cold-water discharges from Philpott Dam.

South Fork Holston River (Smyth County)

The special regulation section is located south of Marion and west of the community of Sugar Grove off of Route 16. Two miles of the stream, which extends from just below the

confluence of Comers Creek upstream, flows through National Forest and private land. Permission is not required prior to fishing within the privately owned sections. Recently included in Virginia's special trout stream regulations, the South Fork offers the opportunity to fish for both trophy rainbow and brown trout. An abundance of 10 to 14-inch trout and some trout in excess of the 16 inch minimum size limit are available.

License Requirements

All residents 16 years of age and older are required to possess a *state fishing license* to fish for trout. Persons who fish in designated stocked waters (those waters listed in the *Trout Stocking Plan*) must have an additional *trout license*. A *National Forest Stamp* is necessary when fishing in most waters within the George Washington or Thomas Jefferson National Forests. Refer to your fishing regulation pamphlet for specific exemptions and costs of licenses.

When fishing in non-designated trout waters, such as wild trout streams or special regulations areas (not listed in the Trout Stocking Plan), the angler only needs a *state fishing license*. However, some of the special regulation areas require a *signed permit card* which can be obtained at no cost from certain VDGIF offices and streamside landowners (refer to individual stream descriptions in this guide for details).

Out-of-state anglers who fish designated stocked waters need to purchase both a *non-resident state fishing license* (five-day, non-resident licenses are available), a *non-resident trout license*, and a *National Forest Stamp* (where appropriate.) For fishing in wild trout or most special regulation waters (except the Jackson River), the non-resident needs only a *non-resident state fishing license*, the appropriate *National Forest Stamp* and *special regulation permits*.

Fee-fishing areas require a *state fishing license* and a *daily fishing permit* that can be obtained on site.

Senior citizens holding previously issued (but no longer available) \$5 *senior lifetime fishing licenses* do not need to purchase any additional fishing or trout licenses. Plus, Virginia residents 65 years or older do not need to purchase a *National Forest Stamp*.

Please consult the regulation pamphlet available where you purchased your license for specific restrictions on size, creel, gear restrictions, and season lengths.

More Questions About Trout Fishing?

Call or write to your closest VDGIF office:

Richmond
P.O. Box 11104
Richmond, VA 23230
(804/367-1000/VTDD).

Verona
P.O. Box 996
Verona, VA 24482
(540/248-9360).

Vinton
209 East Cleveland Avenue
Vinton, VA 24179
(540/857-7704).

Blacksburg
2001 South Main Street
Blacksburg, VA 24060
(540/951-7923).

Lynchburg
Rt. 6, Box 410
Forest, VA 24551
804/525-7522).

Marion
Rt. 1, Box 107
Marion, VA 24354
540/783-4860).

Fauquier County
(42) Thompson WMA Pond



Area 2

Augusta County

- (1) North River (Upper)
- (2) Elkhorn Lake
- (3) Hearthstone Lake
- (4) North River (gorge)
- (5) North River (Natural Chimney)
- (6) Mossy Creek
- (7) Ramseys Draft
- (8) Braley Pond
- (9) Falls Hollow
- (10) Meadow Run (SNP)
- (11) Paine Run (SNP)
- (12) South River
- (13) Back Creek
- (14) Lower Sherando Lake
- (15) Upper Sherando Lake
- (16) Mills Creek Reservoir/Mills Creek
- (17) Coles Run Reservoir
- (18) St. Marys River

Albemarle County

- (19) N. Fk. Moormans River (SNP)
- (20) Doyles River (SNP)
- (21) Sugar Hollow Reservoir

Allegheny County

- (22) Shawvers Run
- (23) Jerrys Run

- (24) Pounding Mill Creek

- (25) Smith Creek
- (26) Clifton Forge Reservoir
- (27) Smith Creek
- (28) Simpson Creek

Bath County

- (29) Douthat Lake
- (30) Wilson Creek
- (31) Pads Creek
- (32) Cascades Creek
- (33) Lake Moomaw
- (34) Back Creek
- (35) Little Back Creek
- (36) Back Creek
- (37) Jackson River
- (38) Muddy Run
- (39) Jordan Run
- (40) Mares Run
- (41) Spring Run
- (42) Bullpasture River

Highland County

- (42) Bullpasture River
- (43) Benson Run
- (44) S. Br. Potomac River
- (45) Laurel Fork

Amherst County

- (46) Little Irish Creek
- (47) Pedlar River
- (48) Davis Mill Creek
- (49) N. Fk. Buffalo River
- (50) Little Piney River
- (51) S. Fk. Piney River
- (52) N. Fk. Piney River

Nelson County

- (53) Shoe Creek
- (54) S. Fk. Tye River
- (55) N. Fk. Tye River
- (56) Tye River
- (57) South Rockfish River

Rockbridge County

- (58) S. Fk. Buffalo Creek
- (59) Buffalo Creek
- (60) Lexington Reservoir
- (61) Mill Creek
- (62) Guys Run
- (63) Maury River
- (64) South River
- (65) Irish Creek
- (66) Big Marys Creek

Area 3

Legend

- wild trout streams
- stocked trout waters
- special regulation waters

Botetourt County

- (1) Roaring Run
- (2) Sinking Creek
- (3) McFalls Creek
- (4) Jennings Creek
- (5) Middle Creek
- (6) North Creek

Bedford County

- (7) Hunting Creek
- (8) Reed Creek
- (9) Overstreet Creek
- (10) Stony Creek
- (11) Liberty Lake

Roanoke County

- (12) Tinker Creek
- (13) Glade Creek
- (14-15) Roanoke River

Franklin County

- (16) Maggadee Creek
- (17) Runnett Bag Creek
- (18) Shooting Creek
- (19) Philpott Reservoir

Henry County

- (20) Smith River

Patrick County

- (21) Rock Castle Creek
- (22) Smith River
- (23) Dan River
- (24) Round Meadow Creek
- (25) Dan River
- (26) Ararat River
- (27) Clarks Creek
- (28) South Mayo River
- (29) Poorhouse Creek
- (30) N. Fk. South Mayo River



Area 4



Craig County

- (1) Potts Creek
- (2) N. Fk. Barbours Creek/ Barbours Creek
- (3) Meadow Creek
- (4) Sinking Creek

Giles County

- (5) Big Stoney Creek
- (6) Little Stoney Creek
- (7) Johns Creek
- (8) Mill Creek
- (9) Dismal Creek

Montgomery County

- (10) Craig Creek
- (11) Poverty Creek
- (12) Toms Creek
- (13) S. Fk. Roanoke River

Floyd County

- (14) Goose Creek
- (15) Little River

- (16) W. Fk. Little River

- (17) Howell Creek
- (18) Rush Fork
- (19) Mira Fork
- (20) Little Indian Creek
- (21) Burkes Fork
- (22) Laurel Fork

Carroll County

- (22) Laurel Fork
- (23) Big Reed Island Creek
- (24) Snake Creek
- (25) Elk Spur Branch
- (26) Lovills Creek
- (27) Stewarts Creek
- (28) Crooked Creek
- (29) Little Reed Island Creek

Pulaski County

- (30) Peak Creek

Bland County

- (31) Laurel Fork Creek
- (32) Wolf Creek
- (33) Lick Creek

Wythe County

- (34) W. Fk. Reed Creek
- (35) Guillon Fork/ Guillon Fork Ponds
- (36) Stoney Creek
- (37) Dry Run
- (38) Cripple Creek

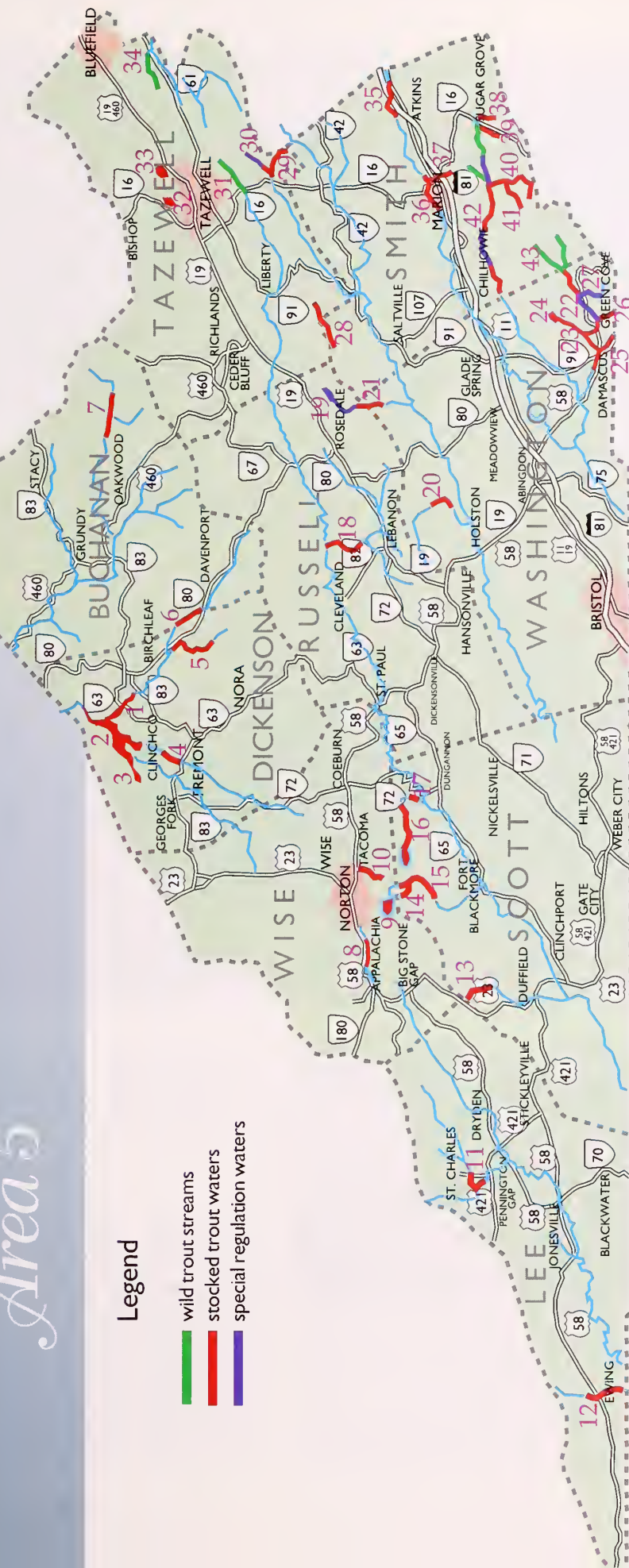
Grayson County

- (39) Hales Lakes
- (40) Elk Creek
- (41) Middle Fox Creek
- (42) Fox Creek
- (43) Big Wilson Creek
- (44) Helton Creek
- (45) Chestnut Creek

Area 5

Legend

- █ wild trout streams
- █ stocked trout waters
- █ special regulation waters



Dickenson County

- (1) Russell Fork River
- (2) Pound River
- (3) Flanagan Reservoir
- (4) Cranesnest River
- (5) Frying Pan Creek

Buchanan County

- (6) Russell Fork River
- (7) Dismal River

Wise County

- (8) Middle Fork Powell River
- (9) High Knob Lake
- (10) Clear Creek

Lee County

- (11) N. Fk. Powell River
- (12) Martins Creek

Scott County

- (13) Stock Creek
- (14) Straight Fork
- (15) Big Stony Creek
- (16) Bark Camp Lake
- (17) Little Stony Creek

Russell County

- (18) Big Cedar Creek
- (19) Laurel Bed Lake

Washington County

- (20) Big Brumley Creek
- (21) Big Tumbling Creek
- (22) Whitetop Laurel
- (23) Straight Branch
- (24) Beartree Lake
- (25) Tennessee Laurel
- (26) Valley Creek
- (27) Green Cove Creek

Tazewell County

- (28) Little Tumbling Creek
- (29) Laurel Creek
- (30) Roaring Fork
- (31) Maiden Spring Creek
- (32) Lake Witten
- (33) Lincolshire Lake
- (34) Cove Creek

Smyth County

- (35) Middle Fk. Holston River (Upper)
- (36) Middle Fk. Holston River (Marion)
- (37) Staley Creek
- (38) Cressy Creek
- (39) Dickey Creek
- (40) Conners Creek
- (41) Hurricane Creek
- (42) S. Fk. Holston River
- (43) Little Laurel Creek





URBAN FISHING MOVES F

by Diane Kane

During the mid-morning hours following Halloween, despite drizzly, overcast weather, Mrs. Victoria Wall's fourth grade class from John B. Cary Elementary School stood excitedly along the edge of Shields Lake, located in the heart of Richmond's urban center. Instead of clutching bags designated for candy,

students firmly gripped the handles of fishing poles, as their eyes remained glued onto bobbing blocks of wood tied to the end of their lines. Their intense concentration shattered only when the first rainbow trout was caught.

On November 1, following a signed agreement in September between the City of Richmond and the

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF), the Department released 600 rainbow trout at Shields Lake. The Department will continue to stock the Byrd Park lake with rainbow and brown trout from November through April, and catfish beginning in May through October, totaling 6,000 fish. This program is part of the Department's



partment of Game and Inland Fisheries. "Six hundred trout in this pond is convenient for locals and might spark an interest to visit other sites that are abundant throughout the state."

The urban fishing program was launched in December 1993, and located at Virginia's three largest urban areas. Each site was chosen based on physical characteristics and the cooperation of a locality. To determine the success of the program, the Department conducted creel studies. The pilot program proved very popular, exceeding the expected goal of 1,000/hour-per-acre of angler activity.

"It's nice to add Shields Lake to the other sites," said John Odenkirk, Chairman for VDGIF's Urban Fishing Committee. "It is the perfect site where there is plenty of safe parking and facilities for the entire family. The other sites were pushed out beyond the city to suburban sites, but now we have returned to our original goal of an urban setting."

As employees from VDGIF and the City of Richmond Recreation and Parks assisted the school children, invited officials from the City of Richmond and Trout Unlimited also took an opportunity to wet a line. Catharine Tucker, VDGIF's board member and former council chairman of Trout Unlimited, grinned unabashed as she snapped a fly rod in perfect figure-eight rhythm. "What a wonderful way to

transport truck for a gentle release into the lake, Richmond's Vice Mayor John Conrad, offered his assistance. The school children eagerly crowded around him to peer intently at the fish. Conrad sank his hands deep into a net of squirming rainbow trout, his grin as wide as the children's. "This is a high policy priority for the City to provide recreational opportunities for its children," he said. "Inner-city youth don't typically get a chance to fish."

Emily Lyons, 8, knows that fishing is fun. She often goes with her father. "I caught a sunfish last time with my dad, but this is neat," she explained. "We're one of the first to fish here and we can keep any fish we catch. I'm going to get a fish." An expert cast left no doubt.

Brehon Lathan, 8, experienced his first attempt at fishing. "I'm really trying to watch that bobber 'cause I want to take a fish home to my mom." Brehon is certain his mother will bring him back to Shields Lake after school.

To fish Shields Lake, a freshwater fishing license and a trout license are required. A license is not required for children under age 16. In an agreement between VDGIF and Richmond City Recreation and Parks, VDGIF will provide fishing gear for loan at Shields Lake. □

Diane Kane is a freelance writer working in the Richmond area.

ORWARD

Urban Fishing Program that also has sites at Northwest River Park in Chesapeake, Dorey Park located in Henrico County and Locust Shade Park in Prince William County.

"The goal of this program is to make it easy for people to enjoy fishing and introduce those that are new to the sport," said William L. Woodfin, director of the Virginia De-



Mel White

teach youth about trout and fishing," she said. "It's a great opportunity to teach all people about this program and introduce them to the fun in the outdoors."

While fish were netted from the



Mel White

Opposite page: VDGIF staff talk to school children about the new fishing opportunity in the City of Richmond. Above: Richmond Vice Mayor John A. Conrad and Secretary of Natural Resources, Becky Norton Dunlop, exhibit one of the trout to be stocked, and, right, Secretary Dunlop joins in the fishing.

Habitat

by Nancy Hugo

Greenbrier: Thorny Food for Wildlife

The reason people don't like greenbrier is the reason rabbits do: it makes thorny, nearly impenetrable thickets. Along the edges of woods, particularly in moist, low-lying areas, long, olive green tangles of greenbrier often hang like curtains between you and wherever you want to be. In his *The History of the Dividing Line*, William Byrd referred to these pesky vines as bamboo brier and noted that the Dismal Swamp was so interlaced with them that there was "no scuffling through them without help of pioneers." In the Uncle Remus stories, Joel Chandler Harris also referred to greenbrier as bamboo brier, and when Br'er Rabbit asked Br'er Fox not to throw him into the briar patch, he was probably hoping to land in a thicket of brambles and greenbrier.

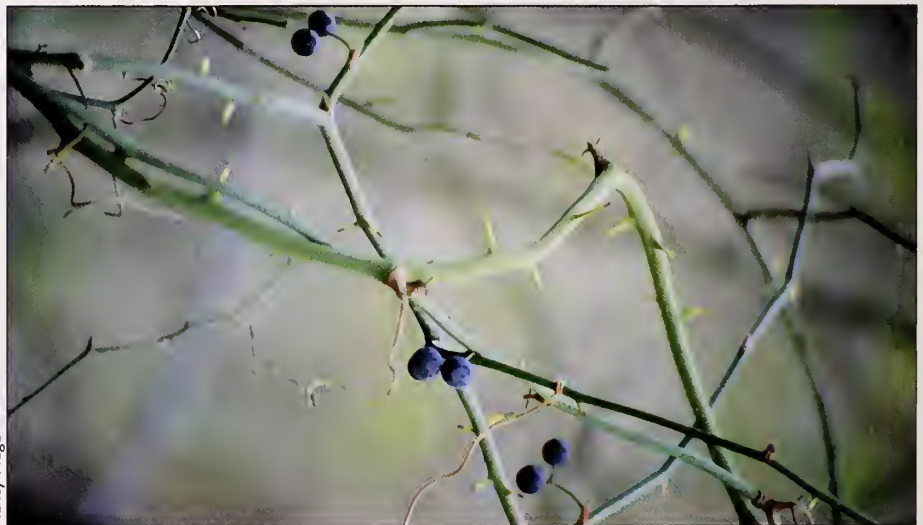
Smilax rotundifolia is the botanical name of this prolific vine which provides both cover and food for wildlife. Although its stout green thorns can rip through a pant leg, the plant is really quite beautiful. Tangles of these green vines, sometimes as high as 15 feet, look downright verdant in the winter woods. Often they're punctuated with a few brick red, mustard yellow, or green leaves that persist on the vines through the winter. In spring and summer, the vines are loaded with shiny, smooth, almost heart-shaped 2½-inch green leaves. Greenbrier also has perfectly round, blue-black, ¼-inch berries that hang in golf ball-sized clusters from the vines. Peel back their thin skins and you'll discover they are almost all seed, but these tough seeds have nutritional value and serve as an important food source for birds like mockingbirds, ruffed grouse, and catbirds.

In winter, when other foods are unavailable, these berries and greenbrier's leaves and stems, which are high in protein, are particularly valuable to wildlife. According to wildlife food experts Alexander Martin, Herbert Zim, and Arnold Nelson, greenbriers (*Smilax rotundifolia* and its relatives) rank fifth among wildlife foods in the southeast (below oak, pine, blackberry and wild cherry; above wild grape, blueberry, hickory, black gum, and holly). Deer are among the plant's principal users, but quail, turkeys, bears, opossums, squirrels, muskrats, raccoons, foxes, pheasant, and wood ducks also dine on greenbrier. The plant's new shoots are reported to be particularly palatable.

In addition to greenbrier, there are nine species of *Smilax* in Virginia (215 species worldwide). One of the most interesting is *Smilax herbacea*, or carrion flower, which has beautiful blue berries but putrid-smelling, greenish flowers. These June-blooming flowers, which Thoreau

said smelled like a dead rat in the wall, attract carrion flies which pollinate them. Like greenbrier, carrion flower climbs over other plants by means of tendrils. *Smilax glauca*, sometimes called sawbrier, has heart-shaped leaves like greenbrier's, but its leaves have whitish undersides and its thorns are weaker than greenbrier's. There's also a *Smilax* (*Smilax tamnoides*) with bristly, often blackish, thorns.

Catbrier is another common name used for these thorny vines. Catbrier, sawbrier, bamboo brier, greenbrier: all these common names draw attention to the aspect of *Smilax* species many of us notice first—the thorns. Although he was probably intending to say more about the sharpness of sin than about the sharpness of greenbrier, Joel Chandler Harris testified to the dangers of both when he warned: "Sin's as sharp as a bamboo brier; ask the Lord to fetch you up higher." Woodsmen, like sinners, would do well to take his advice. □



Nancy Hugo

Deer are among the plant's principal users, but quail, turkeys, bears, opossums, squirrels, muskrats, raccoons, foxes, pheasant and wood ducks also dine on greenbrier.

By Joan Cone

Brookies, Browns and Rainbows— All Good Eating

In case you've forgotten, trout season is yearlong. The old opening day crowds are gone and you can fish when streams are full and water really cold. Sufficient cold water and good habitat are what trout need. In fall, winter and early spring they are healthier and tastier. Brookies, browns and rainbows are all wonderful eating, and maybe you'll use the following ideas to make good meals even better.

MENU

Hot Cheese Dip

Baked Trout

Wild Rice With Oranges

Chocolate Silk Pie

Hot Cheese Dip

- 1½ to 2 pounds Swiss or Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 can (10 ½ ounces) white sauce or make your own
- ½ can (4 ounces) diced green chilies

Grate cheese and blend with white sauce and chilies. Place mixture in a casserole and put in a 325° oven. Heat for 15 minutes; stir and bake another 15 minutes. Remove from casserole and place in a fondue pot or chafing dish and keep warm over low heat. Serve with firm chips such as tortilla or corn chips.

Baked Trout

- 4 trout filets (Use 2 per serving if small)
- 1 tablespoon minced shallots
- 1½ cups cauliflower, finely chopped
- 1½ cups broccoli, finely chopped
- 1½ cups carrots, finely chopped
- 4 fresh mushrooms, sliced
- ½ tablespoon butter + 2 tablespoons butter
- 1½ tablespoons flour
- ¾ cup milk
- 3 tablespoons gin
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon ground pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon nutmeg
- Fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 450°. Butter 4 sheets of 16 x 16-inch of heavy duty foil. Over medium heat, saute shallots and vegetables in ½ tablespoon butter for about 1 minute; remove and set aside. Over low heat, melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter and stir in flour. Cook and stir for a few minutes, being careful not to brown. Add milk, stirring constantly until thickened. Stir in gin, salt, pepper and nutmeg. Cook another minute; set aside. Place 1 filet on 1 sheet of foil and top with ¼ vegetables, ¼ sauce and ¼ cheese. Fold foil over and double-fold edges to seal. Bake about 10 minutes. Do not overcook. Open at table. Serves 4.

Wild Rice With Oranges

- 1 package (6 ounces) brown and wild rice mix
- 2 navel oranges, peeled, separated into segments, halved
- ⅓ cup low sodium chicken or beef broth
- ½ cup sliced red onion
- ½ cup each bite-sized strips red and green bell peppers
- 1 teaspoon fresh grated orange peel
- ¼ teaspoon dried sage
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper

Prepare rice mix according to package directions, cooking in unsalted water. In a skillet heat a few tablespoons of chicken or beef broth. Sauté onion in broth 3 minutes. Add bell peppers and more broth, if necessary. Stir in orange peel, sage and pepper. Saute 3 to 4 minutes more or until vegetables are tender. When rice is done, stir in orange half segments, then onion mixture. Heat through 1 minute more. Serve at once. Makes 5 servings.

Red Cabbage Salad

- 1 cup shredded red cabbage
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- Salt
- 1 ripe avocado
- 1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 cup diced seeded tomato
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Freshly ground pepper

Combine the shredded cabbage with the vinegar. Season with a pinch of salt and toss well. Let sit for 30 minutes to 1 hour. Cut the avocado in half lengthwise and remove pit. Cut each half into 6 to 8 strips. Remove skin from each strip and cut each into ½-inch segments. Carefully place in a mixing bowl and sprinkle pieces with lemon juice. After the cabbage has marinated, drain it and add to the avocado. Add the diced tomato. Drizzle olive oil over ingredients in the bowl. Season with additional salt and several grinds of pepper. Fold together gently and serve. Serves 4.

*Chocolate Silk Pie

This recipe is by Raoul B. Hebert, Executive Chef of the Bull and Bear Club, Richmond, VA.

This intensely chocolatey, silky pie will puff up while baking, mostly around the edges, and will fall in the center when cooling. It is surprisingly light and fast and quick to make—easy as pie.

- 1 10-inch pie shell, unbaked
- 1½ cups (10 ounces) sugar
- ¼ cup (¾ ounce) cocoa
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup (8 ounces) evaporated milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ¼ cup (2 ounces) melted butter

Whisk all ingredients together or place in blender until completely mixed. Pour into unbaked pie shell. Bake in a 350° oven for 35 to 40 minutes. Even though the center is still soft, it will set up when cooled. Refrigerate. Yields 8 servings.

Chef's Notes: Serve plain or dress it up with a flavored cream, Bavarian or mousse topping. Serve ice cream on top—it is like an upside-down fudge sundae pie.

*Recipe from *Culinary Secrets of Great Virginia Chefs*, by the Virginia Chefs Association and Martha Hollis Robinson, published by Rutledge Hill Press, 1995. □

Photo TipS

By Lynda Richardson

"Your Third Magazine Assignment: The Results"



James N. Holmes

1st



Kathryn N. Collister

2nd

Congratulations to all those who entered this year's "Your Third Magazine Assignment" contest. We had 14 people submit 50 images taken around the state. It was a very tough decision to narrow it down to three winners, so this year I added an honorable mention.

As you may remember, this assignment was to travel anywhere in Virginia and capture the portrait of a plant or animal. (See May, 1995 issue.) Here are the results.

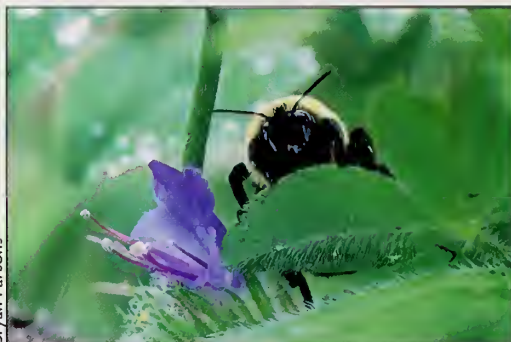
First place goes to James N. Holmes of Winchester for his image of young pileated woodpeckers begging for food from their nest hole. James writes he shot the winning photograph with a Nikon F4 using a 400mm lens and a 1.4X teleconverter at 1/250th at f4.0. Great shot!

Second place goes to Kathryn N. Collister of Falls Church for her image of a tulip poplar blossom. She writes that this photograph was taken along the side of Cinderbed Road in Newington not far from Huntley Meadows Park in Fairfax. Good job!

Bryan Parsons of Charlottesville wins **third place** with his shot of a bumble bee entitled "Darth Vader Returns." Bryan, who placed second in last year's contest, writes that this image was taken at Piedmont Virginia College. Keep up the good work!

I just couldn't resist adding an **honorable mention** after seeing Lester C. Via's photograph of a northern fence lizard. Lester, who lives in Springfield, writes that this image was shot on Fujichrome Velvia "using an old Pentax Super Program with a Pentax 100mm macro bellows lens. Illumination was from a single flash in the TTL mode mounted off camera." Wonderful!

Thanks again to all those who entered this year's contest. If you didn't win this year, don't give up because the "Fourth Magazine Assignment" is coming your way in May! So, as I said before, "stay tuned, sharpen up your trigger finger and give us your best shot!" □



Bryan Parsons

3rd



Lester C. Via

Honorable Mention

Taxes are for the birds...

In the case of Virginia's Nongame Wildlife program, taxes are literally for the birds. At least your state income tax checkoff can be. You can support the study and management of habitat for nongame species by checking off a donation to Virginia's Nongame Wildlife program on your state income tax form.

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goldfinch, kestrel, barred owl, belted kingfisher, black-capped chickadee, cedar waxwing, Cooper's hawk, eastern bluebird, Eastern screech-owl, great blue heron, great egret, hairy woodpecker, house finch, house wren, purple finch, purple martin, red-shouldered hawk, ruby-throated hummingbird,

tufted titmouse, whip-poor-will, big brown bat, common eastern chipmunk, southern flying squirrel, talkative red squirrel, bald eagle and peregrine falcon.

Every dollar counts. The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries receives no General Fund tax dollars, and the Nongame Wildlife Program sustains its work and responsibilities through the generosity of the citizens of Virginia. As you can see from the above list, everyone of us benefits from and enjoys nongame wildlife.

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Bald eagle, photo by Bill Lea

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